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## The Source of the "Mad Nun" Episode in Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*

Jose Victor Torres



The study of the sources of the characters and incidents in the novels of Jose Rizal with real persons and events has been a source of interest to both literary critics and historians alike. Some of these characters have been identified by Rizal himself. The rest have been painstakingly sorted out by critics and historians, investigated and identified in one way or another (see Schumacher 1973; Sanchez 1983; Villaroel 1984). This note is an attempt to do a similar study on one of the episodes in the *Noli me Tangere* which I have called the "mad-nun" episode.<sup>1</sup>

Rizal ends his first novel with an account of a young nun on the roof of the Monasterio de Santa Clara in the Walled City of Intramuros, calling to the heavens to save her as a thunderstorm rages around her. Two soldiers, one of them a *distinguido* (a soldier of noble blood), seeking shelter from the rain are attracted by the spectacle. It is a frightening sight with the nun's doleful moans mingling with the fury of the storm. Scared out of their wits, the two men scamper away and report the matter to the authorities.

The Governor-General (identified as a certain Sr. General J.) orders an investigation and sends one of his aides to the convent to inspect the cloister. Here the man beheld a startling sight: one of the nuns was soaking wet and her habit torn. She began to babble tales of horror which were happening in the convent and begged the man's protection against this "hypocrisy." The crazed woman was said to have been very beautiful. Unfortunately, the authority did not see himself fit to take care of the woman and left. Hearing of this, the governor-general tried to take the nun under his care but a second investigation revealed no crazed nun. The Abbess refused another inspection of the cloister citing the authority of the Church and the Rules of the Order (Rizal 1887, 352-54). Nothing was ever heard of the nun who is Rizal's tragic heroine, Maria Clara.



### Commentary on The Texts

Sometime in 1884, a pamphlet fell into the hands of Rizal while in Madrid. It was entitled, *Escandaloso, horrendo y punible delito perpetrado en el Monasterio de Santa Clara por un Fraile Franciscano, Vicario de la Misma*.<sup>2</sup> It was one of the most serious pieces of anticlerical propaganda aimed specifically against the Franciscan Order.

The contents of the leaflet centers around the alleged scandalous behavior of sexual debauchery of the Franciscan protector of the monastery. The story claims that one evening in 1883,<sup>3</sup> a military officer strolling near the convent was startled to hear a female voice crying for help. Looking up, he saw a nun on the roof of the monastery. Assisted by some soldiers from the detachment near the *Maestranza* (royal armory), they helped the woman down. The nun, identifying herself as Pepita Estrada, then began to ramble a tale that shocked the military men:

The nuns inside, she claimed, were being forced by their Abbess to submit to the sexual whims ("*apetitos carnales*") of their Franciscan vicar. Refusal would mean enforced fasting on bread and wine.

This affair seemed so serious that the soldiers quickly informed Governor-General Joaquin Jovellar who then was in San Juan del Monte.

It was only through threats to open the convent doors by force, that Jovellar, along with his retinue, were able to enter the monastery. An investigation was conducted and it was learned that the situation was worse than it seemed. Three nuns were found to be pregnant and infants had already been murdered. But it seemed that the persuasions of the Church were more powerful than that of the State. The author of the leaflet charges that although there was a clamor for the exclaustation of the nuns of Santa Clara, the exile of the Archbishop of Manila and the expulsion of the friars, Jovellar chose to close the case. Sor Pepita was declared insane and nothing was heard of her again. It is presumed that she was murdered by the friars. The leaflet ends with the cry: Down with the rascal friars! Come, peninsular priests!<sup>4</sup>

Franciscan archivist and historian Cayetano Sanchez cites this leaflet as the source of the "mad-nun" episode. Rizal was apparently influenced by this propaganda and later used its contents in writings prior to the *Noli* as in his essay "Pensamiento de un Filipino" written sometime between 1883 and 1885.



They charged administratively Captain Juan, who had a very pretty daughter whom he forbade to go to the convent to kiss the curator's hand. Well done! That's doubting the holiness of the curate and he truly deserved deportation. Moreover, what's he going to do with his daughter? Why guard her so carefully if, after, all, she's not going to be a nun? Even if she has to be a nun, don't certain rumors somewhere around say *the nuns of St. Clare and the Franciscan friars understand each other very well*? What's bad about that? (Rizal 1964, 14)

Comparing the text of Rizal's novel and that of the *Escandaloso*, we note several similarities. The two women climb to the roof of the building one night to escape the clutches of a lecherous priest; they are discovered and rescued by soldiers; intervention by civil authorities most especially by Governor-General Jovellar (undeniably, the Sr. General J. of Rizal) proves vain; both women are declared to be insane and returned to the care of the monastery; nothing is heard from them again.

### **The *Memorias* of the Order of Poor Clares**

In his paper on the literary sources of the *Noli me tangere*, Sanchez describes the *Escandaloso* "as another of those denigrating pieces clandestinely distributed in the Philippines . . . to blacken the name of the regular clergy." He also cites the tale as "pretentious" and without the least moral scruples and merely propagandistic aims (Sanchez 1988, 110-11). Schumacher (1979, 108), on the other hand, says it is a piece of propaganda centering on a "purported" event in 1883.

We cannot deny the fact that some of the contents of the *Escandaloso* were the product of a literary imagination suited for the purpose of discrediting the religious orders, specifically the Franciscans. But was the "mad-nun" episode one of several true incidents which happened during Rizal's lifetime? The answer is yes.

One of the least known primary sources on the history of the Order of Poor Clares in the Philippines (commonly known as Clarisas) is a set of six, lined brown notebooks containing the chronicles of the order from its founding in 1621 to its transfer to the present motherhouse along Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City. The notebooks have been arranged chronologically and labeled accordingly. They are *Memorias del Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Manila*



Volumes I and II which contain biographies, transcriptions of interviews, passages from books and letters and a summary of the history of the Poor Clares from 1925 to 1942, and *La Destruccion del Monasterio de Santa Clara* Volumes I, II, III, IV which are a chronology of the events of the monastery's activities during the Japanese occupation starting from 1943, the destruction of the convent during the liberation of Manila until the sojourn at the Colegio Serafico in San Francisco del Monte in 1950. Authorship of the notebooks is credited to Sor Carmen de San Miguel Arcangel, the archivist of the order at that time. In her preface to the manuscript, she says that the task of writing the *Memorias* began on 10 January 1947 during the stay in San Francisco del Monte where they were given refuge in 1945.<sup>5</sup>

The *Memorias* was an attempt to reconstruct the monastery archival records which were entirely destroyed during the war. It was a painstaking task of jotting down notes during interviews or from memory by the author, and copying entire passages from books and letters by hand.

One of the interesting interviews by Sor Carmen de San Miguel was that with one of the elder nuns: Sor Matilde de Santa Isabel, a former abbess of the prewar convent. It was during this talk that the archivist questioned the old nun about the Clarissa who went to the rooftop of the Monasterio de Santa Clara in Intramuros to escape as narrated by Rizal in his novel *Noli me tangere*.

According to Sor Matilde, that passage in Rizal's book was based on the story of a certain Sor San Rafael who was suffering from fits of depression and was slowly becoming insane. Although this worried her sister nuns, her condition was ignored by the Abbess at that time and Sor San Rafael was left alone.

At around 12:15 one night, sentries from a nearby barracks were aroused by a cry from the area of the convent. They were startled to see a nun on the roof, carrying a bundle of clothes and asking for help. The soldiers ran to the convent doors to notify the other nuns but the sisters were praying matins and the soldiers' cries went unheeded. It was only after some time that Sor San Rafael was brought down and the nuns were interrupted from their meditation and informed what had happened. This shocked the sisters so much that the Abbess herself became sick and took to her bed.

In the meantime, Sor San Rafael was locked up in a dungeon underneath the dining hall. Her cell was described "in a very bad condition with an earthen floor and no ventilation nor any conven-



iences." Here she was cared for by a lay sister (nana) named Bernardina Obial. In the mornings, she was beaten by her sister nuns as a sort of penance which didn't help her condition at all. Sor San Rafael was believed to have died some two years later in her cell (*Memorias* I: 71).

It is unfortunate that this piece of oral history is undated. However, we have determined a generalized dating by determining several persons and events contained in the text as well as cross-referencing with other data which we take from the pages of the *Memorias*. The findings are as follows.

In the *Memorias* was a brief biography of the life and works of nana Bernardina Obial. Although her birthdate and other data are not mentioned, a passage says that she joined the order "at the right age," then spent all of her life there. The Poor Clares Order began to receive laywomen aged 18 to 26 years old (the "right age") only in 1869.<sup>6</sup> Presuming that she entered the convent at the latter age, Obial would be in her late thirties when the incident happened if we take the year 1883 as fact. It is also mentioned that she died at the age of 79—well into the 20th century (*Memorias* I: 64). If we are to follow Sor Matilde's account, the "barracks" mentioned could only be the ones found in the Maestranza (royal armory) and the Almacenes (royal magazine) found along the banks of the Pasig River and only a few yards away from the convent compound. These structures were demolished in 1903 by American engineers to make way for new river wharves (Salt and Heistand 1964, 71). The nuns were evacuated from the Walled City during the siege of Manila by Filipino rebels and the American navy in August, 1898. It was only after several months that the sisters returned (*Memorias* II: 33).<sup>7</sup> The propaganda Movement began in 1880 and lasted until 1895 (according to Schumacher). The "mad-nun" episode only appeared in the *Noli* in 1887 and in the *Escandaloso* leaflet in 1884. It is impossible for the Clarissas to conjure up such a tale after only reading the *Noli me tangere* or the *El Filibusterismo*. According to Sor Carmen, it was only in 1937 that the order received the first copies of Rizal's two novels. The books were reportedly a gift from their lawyer and administrator, Don Perfecto Gabriel. Still, the ban by the Catholic Church on these works caused further delay before they were read in the convent. Sor Carmen said that she was among the first to read them (*Memorias* I: 78-79). Based on these notes, we are, therefore, limited to a fifteen-year span in the latter half of the nineteenth century in which the "mad-nun" episode could have happened.



The identity and authenticity of the protagonists is determined by a comparison of the texts of the three sources.

The three religious protagonists (Maria Clara, Sor Pepita Estrada and Sor San Rafael) climbed to the roof of the monastery crying for help; the incident happened in the middle of the night; they were spotted and helped by soldiers from the Maestranza (the "nearby barracks"); they were judged to be insane; and nothing was ever known of their fate although it is believed that they died in the convent.

It is unfortunate that the last war destroyed all of the records of the old monastery in Intramuros which had one of the richest archives at that time. Knowing the identity of Sor San Rafael would obviously be next to impossible. (It is obvious that the name is the religious identity she took after taking her vows.) But the coincidence between the protagonists in the two literary texts is so great that it would be difficult to dismiss them as mere fiction. It is obvious that they are speaking of only one and the same person.

It is believed that the story somehow reached the ears of the reformists in the Philippines who sought to report this matter to their comrades abroad. Apparently, the incident was distorted to suit their anticlerical tendencies and discredit the friars in the Philippines. It should also be noted that this piece of propaganda clearly left a stigma on the Order of Poor Clares as tales of "pregnant nuns" and "murdered children in the convents" can still be heard even today.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

It seems clear from the texts that the "mad-nun" episode in Rizal's *Noli me tangere* was based on a true incident which happened sometime in the latter half of the nineteenth century between 1869 and 1884. The event was then exploited by the Propaganda Movement and was published as an anticlerical pamphlet filled with literary devices, inventions, allusions and presumptions. Rizal's mad-nun and the *Escandaloso's* Sor Pepita Estrada came from an incident involving a Poor Clare nun known only by her religious name as Sor San Rafael.



## Texts and Translations

The Texts and Translations of the *Escandaloso, horrendo y punible delito perpetrado en el Monasterio de Santa Clara por un Fraile Franciscano, Vicario de la misma* and the Interview of Sor Matilde de Santa Isabel O.S.C. by Sor Carmen de San Miguel Arcangel O.S.C. in the *Memorias del Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Manila*. Volume I

The following are transcripts reproduced from the two primary documents used in this article. Translations are by the writer.<sup>9</sup>

### A SCANDALOUS, HORRENDOUS AND PUNISHABLE CRIME PERPETRATED IN THE MONASTERIO DE SANTA CLARA by a Franciscan Friar, Vicar of the Said Covenant

One day (in August) of the year 1883, during the term of the Governor-General of the Islands Don Joaquin Jovellar and General of the Civil Administration Don Rafael Ruiz Martinez, there occurred a terrible incident in the Monasterio de Santa Clara of this Capital. At around nine in the evening, as an army lieutenant was passing by the monastery, he was attracted by a female voice crying for help. This man was so moved by the sorrowful cries that he went to the Maestranza and narrated what he saw to the Chief of the Guards of that department. With two armed soldiers, the latter went to the place of occurrence. Once there, he asked the unknown woman what she wanted and what she was doing in that place (the roof of the monastery). She replied that she would give them an explanation if they would take her away from that place.

That Commandant of the Guardia Civil Veterana was informed and he went there with some men under his command. He then ordered that a ladder be placed to take the woman down. After taking her down from that pitiful state, he proceeded to take her testimony in the presence of the Civil Governor. The latter then ordered the nuns to open the doors of the monastery to clear up this matter and to take the necessary actions. But no matter how serious the case was, they refused to open the doors. The Governor then ordered that General Jovellar be informed by telegraph of this matter in San Juan del Monte de Convaleciente.

Upon hearing of the matter, the Governor-General proceeded to the Capital and arrived at around midnight. On arriving at the monastery, he called out that if the nuns did not want to open the doors, he will do so by force by virtue of his powers as Governor-General of the Philippine Islands and the Vice Royal Patron. Upon seeing that the people of the Monastery in question were stubborn, they forced open the doors and General Jovellar entered with all of his retinue.



Once they were inside the Monastery, they began an inquiry. By the declaration of the unknown nun, the immediate cause of her impulsive actions was no other than the scandal. It was not the discovery itself but the extreme horrors which happened to this establishment; the terrible punishment in which they were not given more than a piece of bread and a little wine if they will not yield to the CARNAL APPETITES OF THE VICAR WHICH THE MOTHER ABBESS INSTRUCTS THEM TO DO. That, at the same time, it happened to three of the nuns. According to the diagnosis of the Sr. Canales and others, one was three months pregnant, the other six months, and finally, one was in her final months of pregnancy.

And so, all of these were discovered and proven true. But after it was certified that the poor woman was insane, she revealed all the misfortunes which existed in the establishment. Several bodies of infants were found by the three: General Jovellar, the Civil Governor, the Commander of the Guardia Civil, etc., etc.

After several days, the matter was left to the decision of the Civil Authorities. Perhaps, I myself could sleep the sleep of the just, they say. The officials of the department composed the respective agreement which demanded, among other things, the expulsion from the Monastery of the Abbess in order to serve life imprisonment in the Presidio of the Capital and referring the report to the Registry of the Vicary for a decision. Many could be said about this case but it is best to omit some serious details.

NOTE: The nun's name was Pepita Estrada. Nothing was ever heard from her again and it is believed that she was poisoned, a final and small remedy by the Friars so that the other scandals and excesses occurring in the brothel will not be discovered.

In order to prevent the other nuns from going to the attic and leaving through the roof of the building, the Vicar had the interior of the monastery covered with iron grilles locking the nuns in a terrible manner.

As distressing as this horrible and sacrilegious crime could be, the Vicar and his accomplices have not been punished nor was there any proceedings for the exclaustation of the three pregnant women nor those other Seraglios. It must have been decreed by General Jovellar, who has hushed up the case in exchange for hard cash from the gentlemen of the cowl.

Must this happen to the Philippines alone?

With the petition for the exile of the Archbishop, the expulsion of the friars, it is now time that they dictate the steps on the exclaustation of those who live within that shameful and horrible brothel.

But with the silence of General Jovellar in this punishable case, who will preside in the council which will hear the complaints of the colony?

DOWN WITH THE RASCAL FRIARS! COME, PENINSULAR PRIESTS!

(Jose Ma. Basa [?], no printer, no date)



# ESCANDALOSO, HORRENDO Y PUNIBLE DELITO

PERPETRADO EN EL MONASTERIO DE SANTA CLARA POR  
UN FRAILE FRANCISCANO, VICARIO DE LA MISMA.

*Apéndice*  
En uno de los días del año 1883, siendo Gobernador Gral de las Yslas Dn. Joaquín Jovellar y director Gral de Admon. Civil Dn. Rafael Ruiz Martínez, ocurrió una terrible escena en el Monasterio de Sta Clara de esta Capital: que a eso de las 9 de la noche poco mas o menos y a tiempo que pasaba un Sr Alferrez de este Ejército, apercibió una voz femenil pidiendo auxilio; y movido dho Sr. de los sentimientos humanitarios, se dirigió a la Macetranza y dio conocimiento del asunto al Cabo de Guardia de aquel departamento quien con dos guardias con fusil, se constituyó en el sitio de la ocurrencia, y una vez allí, preguntó a aquella desconocida que quería y cual era la causa de su estancia en aquel sitio, a lo que contestó que no podría dar explicaciones hasta tanto que no le quiten en aquel lugar.

Aviendo el Comandante de la Gna. Civil Veterana, se constituyó con fuerzas a su mando en el referido sitio y dispuso que se pongan planchas de caño para sacar a dicha desconocida, y habiendo conseguido con feliz éxito sacarla en aquel estado tan lastimero, procedieron a tomar la declaración verbal en presencia del Sr Gobernador Civil de la Provincia, quien dispuso se abrieran las puertas del Monasterio para aclarar el hecho y formular las oportunas diligencias, y como quiera que apesar de todo, no quisieron franquear la puerta que da entrada a dho Monasterio; el Sr Gobernador dispuso se diera conocimiento del hecho por Telegrama al General Jovellar, que entonces se encontraba en aquel, en San Juan del Monte, de Convaleciente.

Al enterarse el General Jovellar de la ocurrencia de que se trata, se vino enseguida en esta Capital, llegando al Monasterio cerca de las 12 de la noche, y una vez allí, llamo y dijo que sino lo franquean la puerta y como General de las Yslas Filipinas Vice Real Patrono de las mismas, echaria abajo dho Monasterio por la fuerza armada, y viendo lo mal parado en que quedaria la gente del Monasterio en cuestión, franquearon la puerta y entraron entouces el General Jovellar y todos sus acuitos.



Una vez dentro del Monasterio, comenzaron las averiguaciones formando el oportuno expediente gubernativo, y de las declaraciones de aquella desconocida resultó que el móvil que la impulsó a armar aquel escándalo, no era otro que para descubrir hechos sumamente horribles que ocurrían en aquel establecimiento, cual es el de imponerle un castigo terrible de no darle de comer más que un pedazo de pan y agüandiaríamente, por no conformarse ella a satisfacer los APETITOS CARNALES DEL VICARIO QUE LA MADRE ABADESA LE PROPONIA. Que dentro del mismo en la época aquella se encontraban en cinta tres de su clase, y que según resultó en el reconocimiento practicado por el Sr. Candela y otro, una con tres meses de embarazo, otra con seis, y la última en meses mayores.

De acuerdo que todo lo halló probado plenamente, pero después enlizaron por loca a la pobre joven que descubrió toda la fatalidad que existía en dicho establecimiento hasta los puntos de varios niños que también encontraron los tres General Jovellar, Gobernador Civil, Comandante de la Veterana etc., etc.

Después de algunos días se quedó el expediente en el Gobierno Civil donde hoy quizás duerme con el sueño del justo como suele decirse sin embargo que el Oficial del Negociado ha formulado el correspondiente acuerdo en el que pedía entre otras cosas la expulsión en dicho Monasterio de la Abadesa para sufrir una prisión perpetua en el Presidio de esta Capital y la remisión luego partida de Registro del Vicario de referencia; En cuanto se ha sabido en este asunto, salva omisión de algunos graves detalles.

NOTA.—La monja es Pepita Estrada. Nada ya se sabe de ella, y creen que ha muerto de un jicrazo final y trivial remedio de los Frailes, para no descubrir otros muchos escándalos y excoas ocultos en aquel burdel.

Para evitar que otra monja pueda otra vez penetrar en el zquizano y salir en el techo del edificio, el Vicario hizo cubrir con verjas de hierro todo el interior del Monasterio, encerrando a las Monjas a muera de sierras.

A pesar de tan horrendo y aperilego delito, el Vicario y sus cómplices no han sido castigados hasta ahora ni se procedió a la exclaustación de la reclamante ni de las tres embarazadas ni de todas las que habitan tan deshonesta Serrallo, como debió haberlo decretado por el General Jovellar, quien se calló y echó tierra al asunto por las tiernas y metálicas caricias de la gente de cogulla.

¿Cabo todavía estranar que filipinas es un país singular.¿

Por la petición del extranamiento del arzobispo y expulsión de los frailes, ya es tiempo que se dicten medidas sobre la exclaustación de los que habitan tan vergonzoso y horrible lupanar.

¿Por el silencio del General Jovellar en asunto tan puvible, cabo hacerlo presidir la junta que ha de oír las quejas de Ultramar¿

**FUERA LOS CANALLAS FRAILES, Y VENGAN CLERIGOS PENINSULARES.**



EXCERPT FROM THE INTERVIEW OF SOR MATILDE DE SANTA ISABEL  
BY SANTA CLARA ARCHIVIST SOR CARMEN DE SAN MIGUEL  
in the *Memorias de Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Manila*

YO: De aquella religiosa que subio en el tejado del monasterio de Santa Clara de Intramuros para fugarse que hace relacion Rizal en su novela *Noli me tangere*?

MI: Ah! Aquella se llamaba Sor San Rafael padecia algo de demencia no funcionaba bien la cabeza debido a unos sentimientos que tuvo informaron del estado de la enferma a la Abadesa, mas esta, no dio importancia, puesto que, Sor San Rafael no cometia grandes desatinos, a eso de a las doce y quince minutos de la media noche, un soldado del vecino cuartel que hacia de centinela en aquella noche, llamaba a gritos a las religiosas que rogaban en el coro los matines, naturalmente no le podian atender y el militar se dirigio al torno y aqui tambien a gritos llamaba a la madre tornera, quien al acudir, la canto que una monja subio en el tejado para fugarse y le llamaba a el para que la ayudase y recibiese el fardo que llevaba porque habia de dar un salto del tejado a la calle, mas el, no la quiso recibir y contesto a la religiosa profuga que esperase. Mientras tanto, el soldado corrio hacia el torno para avisar a las monjas del fatal incidente. Las monjas espantadas de la noticia y duro varios dias el susto que experimentaron y la Abadesa mas sensible, se enfermo.

YO: Y que hicieron a Sor San Rafael?

MI: La pusieron en la carcel, sirvieron para esta, los bajos de la chocolatería, entonces estaba en muy mala condición, el suelo era tierra muy humeda y no tenia las ventajas y comodidades que tenía cuando su caridad entro en el Monasterio. Allá vivía solita y su carcelera que era nana Bernardina la llevaba la comida en las horas señaladas y por la mañana la sacaba de su carcel para llevarla al refectorio y aqui, delante de la comunidad la descarqaba sobre sus espaldas varios golpes de la disciplina. La pobrecita padeció mucho y muchas noches pasaba en vela, porque las ratas que abundaban en aquel lugar y otros bichos mas, no la dejaban dormir, subian a su lecho. La nana Bernardina, muchas veces lloraba de compasión contarnos de esta religiosa.

YO: Porque las madres procedieron a Sor San Rafael con excesido rigor sabiendo que padecia de demencia y por tanto a mi juicio no era tan culpable, puesto que la acción realizada por ella fue por locura?

MI: Es que no era realmente loca, un poco solamente. Pobrecita! Los padres franciscanos han dicho que, las madres obraron sobre esta materia con demasiado rigor y crueldad.

YO: Lo mismo digo yo. ¿Cuantos años estuvo encarcelada?

MI: Cerca de dos años hasta morir, puesto que murió en la carcel, de varias enfermedades que contrajo en aquella humeda habitación . . .



TRANSLATION

I: What of the nun who went up to the roof of the Monasterio de Santa Clara in Intramuros to escape which was narrated by Rizal in his novel *Noli me tangere*?

MI: Ah! She was Sor San Rafael. She was a victim of some sort of mental illness. She was not well in the head, giving way to some depressions which she had. They informed the Abbess about her condition but she did not give any thought to this since Sor San Rafael had not committed any foolishness. At about 12:15 in the night, a soldier of the barracks nearby who was on sentry duty that night, began to call out to the nuns. However, they were praying matins in the choirloft and were not able to hear him. Another soldier went to the torno and here he also called to the caretaker who, upon responding to the call, was informed of a nun on the roof trying to escape. She was calling to the soldier to help her and catch the bundle she was carrying to be able to leap from the roof to the street below. The soldier refused the bundle and told the fugitive to wait for him. He then also ran to the torno to inform the nuns of the unfortunate incident. The nuns were frightened by the news and they suffered for several days the fright they had gone through, and the Abbess most of all became sick.

I: And what did they do to Sor San Rafael?

MI: They placed her in a cell reserved for this below the chocolateria (mess hall). The cell was in a very bad state. The earthen floor was very damp and did not have any ventilation nor conveniences that she formerly had when she entered the monastery. There she lived alone and her jailer, who was nana Bernardina, brought her meals at designated hours. In the mornings, she was taken out from her cell and brought to the refectory where the community gave her penitential beatings on her back. The poor girl endured many nights without sleep as rats and other pests were abundant in her cell and climbed her bed and did not let her sleep. Nana Bernardina wept many times with compassion for the nun.

I: Why did the nuns act on Sor San Rafael with excessive vigor when they knew that she was insane and, to my judgment, not responsible for her actions?

MI: She was not really crazy . . . only a little. Poor girl! The Franciscan friars said that the sisters acted on this matter with excessive rigor and cruelty.

I: I would say the same thing. How many years was she locked up?

MI: About two years before she died, presumably in the cell, of the illnesses which she contracted in that humid place. . . .



## Notes

1. For a similar study, see Sanchez (1988, 57-112).
2. Agoncillo (1956, 25) cites that Marcelo H. del Pilar was the author of the leaflets. Schumacher (1973), on the other hand, attributes the authorship of this pamphlet to Jose Ma. Basa, the Hongkong-based propagandist. There is no mention of either a date of publication or printer.
3. A copy from the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental in Madrid has the handwritten note "Agosto" beside the year.
4. Basa (n.p., n.d.). The parting words of this handbill clearly shows the anticlerical characteristics common to the Propaganda movement.
5. Carmen de San Miguel Arcangel O.S.C. *Memorias del Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Manila Volume I* (unpublished ms.). These notebooks were misplaced during the transfer of the order to their new monastery along Aurora Boulevard. They were later found by this writer and Fr. Efren Jimenez of the San Pedro Bautista Church at the Franciscan Archives in San Francisco del Monte, Q.C. They have been recently returned to Mother Rosa de San Antonio O.S.C., the present abbess of the order.
6. *El origen de recibir seglares dentro en la clausura* (unpublished document of an interview with Mons. Cesar Ma. Guerrero by Sor. Carmen de San Miguel Arcangel) p. 2.  
 "Despues de recibieron mayores. Si mal recuerdo el ano 1869 cuando la comunidad comenzo a recibir jovenes de mas edad de 18 hasta 26 anos. . . ."
7. ". . . el ano 1898 era la tercera vez que abandonaba ser querido convento por la insurreccion y estuvieron viviendo cerca de un mes en una casa aquilada en Sampaloc, Manila . . ."
8. One such example is found in a Communist anticlerical work written by former Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) leader Jacinto G. Manahan entitled *Ang Mga Lihim at Hiwaga ng Simbahang Katoliko* written in 1931 but published in 1958. On Chapter 3 which was entitled *Ang Maiitim na Anino sa loob ng mga Simbahan, Kumbento, Beaterio at Monasterio* is a story with the heading: "Ang malungkot na kaysaysayan ni Bb. Pepita Estrada na naglusot sa bubungan ng 'Sta. Clara.'"
- It then proceeds to tell the tale as found in the *Escandaloso* pamphlet. Moreover, some oral history subjects interviewed by the writer on Intramuros history mentions the Santa Clara Monastery as the place "kung saan pinapatay ang mga bata" and "mga madreng nabubuntis."
9. The writer would like to thank Fr. Cayetano Sanchez of the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental in Madrid and Fr. Efren Jimenez O.F.M. for providing copies of the *Escandaloso* pamphlet and lending the *Memorias* respectively. And most especially to Florentino H. Hornedo, for checking the translations.

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